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Literary Designs, May 15, 1944

Moorhead State Teachers College

LITERARY DESIGNS

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West . . .

By Constance Clarke

To the passer-by, moving along the east side of the street, the west side might seem nothing more than a setting of four or five mid-western bungalows filing after each other, in self-satisfied monotony, with carefully clipped lawns marching out to the sidewalk. On a summer evening, when the lawns are cluttered with gaudy canvas chairs and husbands shifting across the grass, pulling wet black hoses behind them, one could find a bit of peace in knowing that every night from June till August the husbands would be there, watering the lawns and think of little more than the work they did, or of the wives inside, or of how fine the grass was. But to a child who has lived on the east side, and grown, and watched the west change from fields to white houses, the view is sentimental, not merely neat and constant.

There was a time when the bit of road between separated a youngster from tall grass which waved and sang, and silently leaned over when he wandered in it. To dash across the road was like jumping from bed onto a cold, exciting flor, and when the cool grass had closed behind, the adventurous possibilities were unending. An untended field became a boy's wilderness heaven, with one luxurious hill playing lord over the flooding prairie. And as the boy grew, the grass fell below his head, and a whole new heaven of trees and sky was there. On the brow of the hill someone had planted a row of crab-apple trees, which quarreled in the wind. There was years and years when the lanky boy had run and screamed and torn up and down the patient trees with others who ran and screamed. But while he climbed on the bending hill and slept in the sweet grass, something from back east of the road called him over again and the gay wilderness ran on alone.

When next he looked, there were houses there, not familiar and warm as the hill had been, but impersonal and proud of the mark they had made. Yet back of them still, where they cannot go, are the crab-apple trees scribbled against the west, and the grassy hill where little boys sleep.

Spring Magic

By Astrid Anderson

A pungent breath of spring slipt through the window
Caressing my face with its soft, elusive fingers,
And my mind was still.
I did not hear the droning of the lecture
Nor the poetry being read in the classroom.
Yet I grasped beauty.

Rose Garraghty Stirs The Gravy

By Jean Rutkowski

"Aintcha got no decency er bringin' up? Din't yore ma teach ya nothin'? Here, gimme that plate."

Rose Garraghty looked up quickly from the gravy ladle. With an honest curiosity, a simple inquisitiveness, she sought the general direction from which such a verbal assault had hailed. And then, seeing what she had expected, and nothing more, she lapsed into unintelligible mutterings.

"These defense workers don't care about food at all. They grab and push so they can take it away from somebody else. And then when they do get it they just mess around with it as if it were so much mush. Oh well, what can I do about it?"

So she did nothing; instead she gazed belligerently from across the counter at the woman of rotund figure who was settling herself upon a low three-legged stool. So intent was Rose looking at this great figure of a woman that she almost missed seeing the boy that stood beside her. Yet there he did stand, with his hands upon his hips and his legs spread wide apart, glaring down angrily upon the nesting woman who had just spoken to him. He had the spirit—but not the will; though he opened his mouth a number of times to speak, he was silenced equally as many times by fear of greater vehemence.

All of this, however, escaped the notice of the "huge," for she munched and champed along uninterruptedly as a cow, taking no thought of the unwilling honor of her meal.

Rose shrugged off the reaction she felt and moved hastily to the stove in order to watch the gravy. No, it still remained golden and thick, bubbling slowly. That bubbling had fooled her. At first she had thought that the sound was dry and that would mean it was burning. But all was fine—the gravy was hot but unscorched. 'Shere, that's something to be proud of', she thought. No one could ever complain to her that she served lukewarm food; she was being paid for doing her job, and do it she would.

"But these defense people!" She shook her head, for she had yet to understand them.

Of course Rose could have dismissed them as worthless trash, but it was not in her to carelessly waive anything in that manner. Anything odd in behavior must be examined and dissected for possible use in backyard gossip circles. Now, Rose was not a vicious woman, and simply because she delighted in small talk does not indicate an unfortunate flow in her personality. On the contrary, her interest in those little things was probably

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Home Beautification, Curse It

By Marilyn Miller

We have a lawn. It is made up principally of grass. This grass of ours entertains no scruples relating to excess growth. I don't know if it's photosynthesis or choroplasts or what, but whatever it is I am dubious about it. I'm afraid our grass got an oversupply somehow.

We also have two old, decrepit lawn-mowers. (Father has great faith in old, decrepit things; witness our series of private equipages) the more delapidated of which may be distinguished by the wire around its wheels. When we decide to mow this lawn of ours it becomes a family project. Father usually introduces the subject with morose martyrdom. "Don't know why I bought those lawnmowers. They just set around getting rusty while the yard goes to grass. In a family of five you'd think that someone would spend half-an-hour a week keeping that lawn down." After Father has, in the course of human events and many days, made several like gloomy observations our minds begin to play with the problem of the lawn. **Shall** it be mowed? If so, **when** shall it be mowed. **Who** shall mow it? Tune in tomorrow and—but I digress. Well, within a day or so we have firmly established answers to those first two great questions; but the last and most portentious, i. e., **who,** remains yet to be solved. It invariably involves "great argument," and invariably each of us "comes out by the same door as in she went." To be specific, each of us decides that mowing the lawn would be an exquisitely delightful task for our two sisters. Bunny is usually the most convincing. She uses many and various means of persuading us that she is unable to mow the lawn this time, the chief and most convincing being just not there. Consequently it leaves Margaret versus Marilyn unless—unless they scheme together the coercion of the Bunny. Usually they are not up to it either physically or mentally, so after grave and weighty consideration they come to a decision. The lawn shall receive its trimming by both of them. Marilyn, being the more delicate, is allotted the least aged and least tired mower, the one without the wire around its wheels; while Margaret, being more substantially built, agrees to take the one **with** wire around its wheels. They hold a conference regarding which parts of the lawn they should tackle first. Margaret maintains that she will mow on this side of the walk and Marilyn may mow on that; and then they put their heads together and plot to leave the "back" for Bunny. They seek out Mother's advice in this. She is agreed; and it has been decided under due process of law that the "back" shall be left for Bunny. Margaret and Marilyn are now ready to actually cut the grass, the shortest and least difficult phase of the entire project. Oh, their hair! They almost forgot. Scarves. Marilyn attacks the medley of garments in "The Hall," but her search is futile and quite audibly peeved she lopes upstairs to make a pass at her "mystery drawer." By this time Mother has caught the scent, and in a few minutes hands her chagrined daughter a scarf. "Where'd'ja find it," asks Marilyn suspiciously. "In 'The Hal'," returns Mother resignedly. In the meantime, Margaret is considering the potentialities of two scarves—one red, quite ragged; and one blue, quite ragged. She cannot decide between them. Resolutely she shuts her eyes, swirls them around on the table top and grabs. It's the blue one. So naturally she knows that it was the red one she wanted and she proceeds to tie up her hair in it.

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A Cloud Impaled

By Jean Rutkowski

A cloud impaled upon a copper hill,
Serene and sure as the handclasp of of the right.
And then when thru, darting up the sky
Promising to return by and by.
A dancing nocturnal rendezvous,
A voice as liquid as a Grecian gown.

The River Waits

By Mae Tonneson

The Red River is red. Looking down from a bridge that spans the distance between North Dakota and Minnesota into the darkly swirling water below, I came to that conclusion. It is red in reality and red with knowledge of life. It has seen a wild prairie, inhabited by scattered Indians and occasional buffalo, turned into a productive mother of man's will. It has seen the history of a great country in the making.

Actually, if the truth must be told, the river is a sort of muddy brown in color. But when one is aware of some of the treasures of memories which this unique river possesses, it assumes the bright hue of vibrant life.

Strangely enough it flows north. Emerging from a beautiful lake, it flows north through the lush prairies of a valley of its own proud creation. It meanders past wheat fields and farms into a colder land beyond the Arctic Circle where it is finally lost among the ice floes of Hudson Bay.

On the age old journey it has observed much. It saw the Indians coming from the east as the white man advanced. They were soon gone. The river was alone again. It made a lonely journey to its outlet.

Who were these people? They were strange to the river. Thy didn't stop for long. Their queer two-wheeled carts trundled busily along about twice in a year's time. Later they borrowed power from the magnificant river and floated ambitiously upstream in large boats, only to return before dead winter quieted the land with its whiteness. Then all was silent for a time. The voyageurs did not make the prairies ring with their shouts during the long dreary winter, but they would return with the awakening of spring.

These first white men who braved discouragements of friends and climate came with determination. They were overjoyed upon discovering the rich black dirt born of the river, and the river was proud, though resentful, at their intrusion. These farmers were an enthusiastic handful of men who had come from across a larger body of water. Queer shouts in a strange tongue shattered the tranquility of the river.

The river and Mother Nature joined forces in an attempt to rid themselves of the intruders. Knife-like winds and fluffy whiteness rapidly combined to make life miserable for those who were new. In spring the river broadened. It went over its banks, deliberately washing away tiny seedlings tenderly placed there by the newcomers. The stalwart determination of the newcomers was admirable. They did not flinch, but kept on unceasingly. The river was learning a new type of respect.

It learned to love its human neighbors. It served them in many ways, accepting the bridges with a new mildness, only occasionally demonstrating its power by removing them when they obstructed too much. The river was not to be completely quelled. Self-respect was what it wanted to keep. Man was not to lose sight of its potentialities.

The Watchers - - -

By Margaret Stevens

There was prairie, thin in the first thin rain of spring,
and then suddenly
a line of trees for no reason;
cottonwoods, out in the wet
stubble of last summer's wheat, alone,
just standing there—
no birds to hold, no barns to rub against—
keeping the wind from nothing.

'Queer,' you said.

We found a hollowed-out place at their feet,
its once sharp angles rounded
with years of quiet leaves and the labor of grass;
a board or two; bricks bleached like bones,
and a dry well
that whispered when you worked the pump.

They did not notice that we went away
and left them silent in the rain
remembering.

Going, Going, Gone!

By Harriet Rovelstad

No self-respecting farmer would leave all his machinery strewn over the yard like that. There must be some other explanation for the hay mower, the binder, and a manure spreader standing in the spacious farm yard. A closer inspection revealed cultivators, plows, a bright orange tractor, rakes, disks, harrows ,and wagons lined up in seeming rows across the yard. All the horses and stock were tied in their stalls in the barn; the hogs were penned up in small squared-off sections of the hog pen. And to make the appearance of the farm even stranger, innumerable people were gathered around the machinery, talking or just looking. To an outsider, all this might seem rather mystifying, but to the denizen of the rural areas, it only meant a farm auction was being held.

The actual bargaining and selling was scheduled to begin at eleven a. m., but long before that, clouds of dust could be seen from cars driving up the road lined by tall elms, into the yard, and scattering its occupants. The women, dressed in crisp print dresses, headed for the house surrounded by lilac bushes with stately pines for a background, and the furniture aligned for inspection. The youngsters, miniatures of the parents in prints or blue denims, made bee-lines for the lunch wagon, and the older men departed toward the barn, stock pens, or the machinery sections. The day was warm and dry, as days in early autumn are likely to be. Outer coats were left in the cars as the heat of the day increased and the sun rose higher in the heavens.

By eleven o'clock the hero of the performance, the auctioneer, and his partner, the clerk from the bank, carrying sheets of paper clipped on a board, had arrived on the scene and were busy conferring with the owner of the property as to the proper procedure of the sale. The order and the minimum auction price of the articles were duly agreed upon.

Sam, the auctioneer, slowly made his way toward the rows of machinery. This was a signal for all the men, overall clad or in shiny blue serge, to gather around. Each man tried to get nearest to the particular piece of machinery in which he was interested, and still be close enough to hear what was going on. The sale price of the mower or the plow would be a choice topic for further conversation around the hopper at the grain elevator in town. Sam propped one foot on the wagon tongue, and informally addressed the group.

"Folks, you all know what we're here for, so I'll save my wind and not make a long speech. The terms are as usual, cash on the barrelhead before taking anything off the grounds. I'm sure you all know that. You can make all the necessary arrangements with Joe here; he'll take care of you. Now folks, we'll begin this auction by offering up for bidding, this fine strong, wooden-wheeled wagon with a hay rack. It's in good condition, as you can see, and it's good for many more miles. What am I offered for this wagon and rack? Do I hear any bids? Who'll give me twenty dollars? Twenty dollars for this fine wagon and rack."

(Continued to next column)

Tomorrow

By Grace Morkert

We go forth from day to day
Facing the sorrows that come our way,
Meeting the problems confronting life,
Winning them through work and strife.

Every day there comes a while
When it's hard to pass things off with a smile.
When it's hard to laugh while others are blue;
But stick to the fight, you're one of the few.

One of the few who can't be beat,
One of the few who smile at defeat,
One of the few who hold to the right
And conquer trouble when it comes night.

Going, Going, Gone

"Twenty," boomed a voice from the edge of the crowd.

"Twenty-five," came from farther inside.

"I have twenty-five, twenty-five, who'll make it thirty, thirty?" chanted Sam.

"Thirty," said a weazened old man in the front row.

"Thirty-five," roared the pompous man with the gray felt hat.

"Thirty-seven," squeaked the little old man in front.

"Forty, forty, I've got thirty-seven, who'll give me forty?"

"Forty," said the man with the hat.

"Forty-two," piped the undersized individual.

"Forty-two, forty-two, who'll make it forty-five? Forty-two, forty-two, go-ing, go-ing, gone! To Jim Lacey over there for forty-two dollars. Got his name, Joe? Now we'll go on to this mower. It has a six-foot cut with all the guards and sections in good condition. Good strong oak tongue with whipple trees. Good shape all around. What'll you bid?"

By this time the pungent odor of hamburger and onions was being wafted from the lunch stand under the spaciou red-gold maple tree. The good ladies of the Ladies' Aid Society were busy behind the counter frying the red meat in big iron frying pans. Stacks of home-made rolls were piled on the table, ready to be split, buttered, and the meat slipped between. Several small boys, and others not so small, were hovering around munching the tasty sandwiches. Huge "thresher" cups of coffee were being regularly filled by a stout, jolly-faced woman with a big white coffee pot.

Through the open door of the big

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Shadows

By Esther Schumm

It was a bear.
Although he sat behind a tree,
The moon was bright,
And I could see
It was a bear.

The small tree bent before his weight;
I dared not move;
I knew my fate.
It was a bear.

Then with a roar of awful hate
He scampered by the
Old park gate.
It was a hare.

Home Beautification

(Continued from page one)

Marilyn's problem is not so easily solved. She is riveted before the kitchen mirror transfixed in the enthralling task of tying on her scarf in the most becoming manner. When she has finally achieved an effect which combines all the merits of Schiaparelli, Haile Selassie and Sully's **Boy With a Torn Hat** she is satisfied, and Marilyn and Margaret meet, compare notes and come to the conclusion that they are now ready to mow the lawn. (If I could manage sound effects there would be the clash of cymbals and the beating of drums at this point.)

Margaret and Marilyn have betaken themselves out to the lawn. They roll out the mowers. Marilyn takes a diagonal slice across the front and over the cement walk to get into her own territory, but a small toad unwittingly hops in front of the oncoming machine and he and Destiny meet. He is mortally wounded. Here is a most distressing situation. Marilyn allows in a distracted and emphatic voice that mow the lawn she will, but mow toads she will not. Margaret shudderingly agrees. But the wounded toad suffers and Marilyn runs for a weapon with which to hasten merciful and soothing death. She aims her stick, grits her teeth, screws her eyes tightly shut, and strikes—the ground. She opens her eyes and strikes again, this time leaving them open. A hit! She wishes she'd kept them shut. After the removal of the toadie's corpse she decides that the lawn (and it's a large one) must be gone over with a fine-toothed comb for toads. A long, branched stick does excellently in lieu of a fine-toothed comb. After this has been done with meticulous care and all captured toads removed from the precincts, Margaret and Marilyn again set their mowers in motion. In a short time they are through, because as I said before the actual cutting of the grass is the least complex of the tasks that come under the heading of "Mowing the Lawn at Millers."

P.S. The "back" is still waiting for Bunny.

I Have A Sister-

but my mother has a daughter

By Marilyn Miller

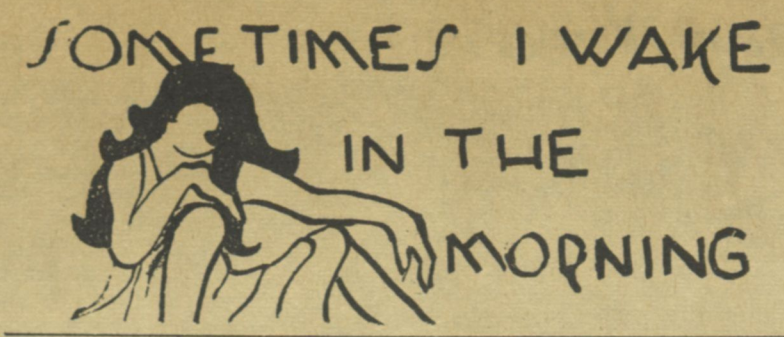
Of all the sorrows born to men
Since this universe began,
Here is the woe that's most distressing
The girl in the family adolescing.

Now, here is a house of average mien
Complete with a girl of sweet sixteen.
Our home-(the which, of course, God Bless)
Must watch its daughter adolesce.

Skirts and sweaters and ankle chains,
Hot licks and hep talk to addle our brains,
For such, it seems, is the very quintessence
Of life with a girl in adolescence.

Adolescence, 'tis said, produces a tension
In the nervous system of her we mention.
How much greater the strain, nobody guesses,
On the family of she who adolesces.

Yes, babies are born and old men die.
Inventors invent and times goes by,
But we lay all trivial things to rest
Until our daughter is adolesced.



By Constance Clarke

Sometime I wake in the morning, with yesterday
Tight in my hands. And I can hold it up,
For what it is, and curse myself, foolishly.
Yet can't quite bring myself to bury it.
And then it is I feel my heart walled in . . . gray . . .
And I am just the way a man might be,
Who, having walked within one cell too long, crazy,
Walks every day around it inch by inch.
Thinking perhaps he might have been mistaken
And that the ugly stone is not all ugly, solid stone.
So, lying here, with my hands full of things to do,
I make the rounds of my thought to see if
There is not a small door
Through which I could dart, and be free.
But there never is.

My Own Back Yard

By Dorothy Jefferson

There is a charm about places where one has had many happy times as a child, which one can never quite recapture as he grows older, but still—something of the memory lingers on. When I look back, my most nostalgic thoughts go to the happy times spent in my own back yard. It is a lovely place for a child, far from the eyes of prying and curious adults who can never really understand the thoughts and vagaries of a child's mind, no matter how sympathetic they may be.

Directly behind our large and rambling house is a steep hill. As the steps going down are unevenly spaced and far apart, it is quite precarious and delightful for a youngster to scramble down. Below this hill lies a large and fruitful garden, and through it a path leads to a rather densely wooded area which extends about 300 feet down to the river. This separate little world was the enchanted place of my childhood dreams. Nature's arrangement could not be improved. The ground is covered with long, shaggy green grass; the place is an entanglement of tall, overspreading elm and oak trees and disorderly, leafy bushes. On both sides are dug-outs dug in the ground by my cave-minded brothers.

The most delightful spot is in the upper left section near the garden. Here there is an outdoor room—a round citadel, surrounded by a wild growth of bushes and half grown trees, and an entrance protected by a gigantic elm tree, which makes a leafy-patterned roof over the little room and yet allows little patches of sky to peek through. During the time I played there, we made a fireplace out of bricks and a wire grating my mother gave me, for with the garden close at hand, we had illimitable opportunity to make all sorts of concoctions.

On a warm summer's day, it was pleasant to enjoy the cool shade of this idyllic place. Here we could play Robin Hood without fear of ridicule, or just loll around in the cool velvetness of the grass and talk of our childhood aspirations. We liked to listen to the soothing woodland sounds—the wind in the trees, the warbling and often querulous tones of the robins and sparrows, and the occasional splashing of a stone in the river. That was one of our favorite pastimes; we were fascinated by the gradual widening of the rippling circles, which continued long after the little stone had disappeared, and then faded away into the slowly moving river. We were surprised at the loud, pulsing sound of the crickets, for they are such tiny creatures to keep up such a racket. Often, too, we heard the muffled sound of voices, coming across from the river or from over the hill. We seemed so far away and yet so close to civilization. Wordsworth expressed the feeling in describing Tintern Abby,

"Hearing oftentimes
The still sad music of humanity
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue."

The garden, of course, was an ever-present source of delight. It was fun to pull from out of the stubborn ground the reddish gold carrots and crunch their crispness mixed with the twang of clinging dirt not rubbed off. Better still, it was, to look for the ripe tomatoes, nestled down under profuse leaves as if trying to hide from the keen eyes of the young searchers. These were my favorites, but there were vegetables of all kinds and they seemed bigger and better when picked and eaten during thse intervals of play. And on our fireplace we cooked many a half raw, unappetizing mess and ate it with gusto, although we could have scornfully disdained anything twice as attractive at home.

Although many years have passed since I played there, I still like to scramble down the steep hill, pass through the garden pulling up a carrot along the way, and walking slowly among the trees, think of the many happy hours spent there.

Rose Garraghty

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the explanation for her comparative satisfaction in her most tiresome of jobs.

There she stood over the stove, and upon looking over her shoulder into the pan it was so very evident that she was an excellent cook. But it was always the food that they were interested in, not in the shoulder itself. Her frame held no charm other than a kind of motherly plumpness.

But if there possibly had been a great sorrow or a great love in Rose's life she showed not a trace of it. She was ordinary in every respect, and if George and Al sat talking too loudly over there in the corner of the cafeteria Rose would not politely assume indifference. Instead she strained to hear what George was saying—

"All right, so your gonna quit; then what? My God, where dy'a think yore gonna git another job like this? You're frozen, man! Don't you think of things like that?"

"Sure, sure I do, but listen, I've had all I'm goin' to take from that straw boss. If he thinks he can shove me around he's got another think comin'. As fer being froze—hell, I ain't worryin' about that; a little finaglin' with the gal in the office and she'll fix my name."

"Yeh, I guess that'll work, but it's easier not to make a fuss and go to all the bother when you could just forget about it and keep makin' that $75 a week without a break. Aw, calm down Al, and think it over. You get paid good for just checkin' water pressure, and you get lots of time off to chase around! What more d'ya want?"

"A lot more, a hell of a lot more! Listen, I'm a man, and I ain't lettin' no one forget it. I don't give a damn how little work I do here ,or how much I get paid, I want to be treated with respect."

"Yeh, I know Hector ain't no cinch to work for. What did he do? Get drunk again?"

"Like a sot, but that don't bother me so long as he leaves me alone—but he took a swing at me, and I didn't see it so I went down. Now I just—"

Rose stopped straining for she had heard her fill. It was the same old story about Jim Hector's abusive treatment of those who were unfortunate enough to work below him. It was always the same. The workers always quit and left for downstate to get another defense job. Later she would hear that something went wrong there and they would quit again. Quit, mind you, not get fired, because men are too precious.

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Words

for a depot platform

By Margaret Stevens

There will be other times, and other places.
The bird will not forget his song;
he will sing it again with the same faint surprise,
as if he had just thought of it.
And water will make
the same sound over stones tomorrow
as it did yesterday, as it will
while the stones last.
The road does not end here;
the curve of the land beyond
fits to the curve of this,
and is of the same stuff.

Speak Of War

By Constance Clark

I have heard my elders speak of war
for many years. (But they little ex-
pected me
to weep beside them over good men,
gone.
Dead men, never known to me; but
only asked
that I should listen as they told).
Yet somehow I have stood quite near
those men
whom I shall never know. And un-
derstood them.
As if a childish heart could under-
stand
how noble death had come to noble
men!
But now I too, grown up in peace,
grow old in war, to speak of it
to younger ones,
who have no heart to weep
for such a distant dead.
I wonder if someone far ahead
Is weeping now for these . . .
my dead.

STAR OF NIGHT

By John Poliseno

Highest star of night
Send down to me your light
That I may find my way
Through the struggle of today.
The roads of peace are mined
With war, disease, and crime.
Many innocent lives are lost,
But few are ready to bear the cross.
Oh, shining star so bright,
Why do you appear at night?
Tell we what you know
By the twinkling of your glow.
Will peace come soon,
Or must it bloom
Like a small hiden seed
Growing between choking weeds?
Peace will come
When all men love,
And know exactly what it means,
And honor peace as their eternal
queen.

To A Blonde Walking Down the Street

By Jean Rutkowski

Strangely fetching you are milady,
But why bother to walk that way?
Yes, your figure is curvy, and your legs are nice
But lady, these men won't look even twice!
Believe me, delicious one, and profit a little:
Adolescents don't gratify, and grandpas are senile.

Rose Garraghty

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"Defense workers!" she snorted.

She snorted gaain, just for emphasis. And yet in her derision, she had time to wonder what everything was going to come to. Here a country was supposed to be fighting tooth and nail for victory, and she saw this shiftlessness and inefficiency.

But it was too much for her. After all, what could she know about governmental policies? There were those that should know and if they didn't know, well, she supposed the country would just have to go to pot.

To pot? Oh yes, that reminded her. She must not let the gravy burn—so she picked up the long spoon.

My Dream - - -

By Juell Linde

The fury of the storm was at its height. In the living room the lights were low; the fire cracked in the fireplace; and the odor of popcorn filled my nostrils as I lay on the sofa, completely relaxed, with a book in my hand. My book, a textbook, was far from interesting, and soon my thoughts were far from the cozy room with its home-like appearance: the fireplace, dimly lighted lamps, and the tantalizing odors which floated from the kitchen.

The year was 1860, and my parents, people of distinct social standing, had arranged my marriage with a young man of a well-to-do family living in England. He was to arrive in the morning and we were to be wed that day. As I dressed for the masquerade party that was to be held that night, my thoughts pondered on what this man would be like. Would he be tall, dark, and handsome? I gave a silent prayer that he would, for I was five feet six inches tall. His character, I hoped, would be that of a loving and gentle husband, yet a determined and authoritive young man. Many other illusions of men filled my mind, but none found a bigger or better place there than this one. Doubts filled my mind as to whether or not he would fill my expectations. My parents were not the type to select a man for his physical or mental traits, but rather for his social standing.

I realized this only too well as I walked down the stairs that evening to the masquerade. As I walked, my heart was troubled. My costume was to represent that of a yellow butterfly, and with its folds of beautiful lace I knew I was a stunning figure. I was flung from the arms of one man to another, and soon I was very tired. My feet hurt, and I was ready to run to my rooms at any moment. All of a sudden, there appeared in the doorway, a figure very startling to the eyes. His cloak, lined with scarlet red, was flung over his well developed shoulders as if it were meant to be there. His eyes were dark and glistening with a very dangerous, exciting look. I looked him over from head to toe, and found to my surprise that he fit my ideal of a perfect husband. If there ever was a man tall, dark and handsome, it was he.

I continued to dance, and soon I found myself in the arms of this dashing figure. His name, I learned, was Rhett Barry. Where he came from, I didn't know, nor did I care. Soon we were dancing in a world all our own. No longer did my feet ache, and I felt more like a butterfly should. We danced madly on through the night, ignoring everyone around us. As much as my heart sang, there was a tinge of pain, since I knew that on the morrow I would be married to a man I had never seen.

I woke the next morning with a heavy heart, and as I walked down the stairs to the tune of the wedding march, my heart was far from what a bride's heart should be on the day of her wedding. I reached the altar, and someone gently took my hand. I looked up, expecting to see my husband, only to behold my mother telling me to come and join the family in the kitchen. By the time I had reached the kitchen, I again took in the scene around me, and sensed the smell of popcorn. As I went into the kitchen, I thought to myself," What a wonderful way to spend an evening at home!"

Bride - 1944 Model

By Naomie Strom

We were sitting on the bed, just talking about inconsequential little things when I began wondering—wondering about my slim, almost too thin, blonde companion. She looked so doll-like and so very young with her hair piled high in expert pincurls, and her slim blue skirt and baby pink blouse and her bare, hoseless legs. So immature, I thought—no older than myself—yet her competent hands and her serene manner made me realize that the experience of making a new home amidst strange surroundings, and her martial responsibility made her seem older, almost timeless.

I can imagine the dreams that this and every war bride must have—dreams of a safe and serene existence. What comprises those dreams? I know—she wants a little white bungalow with blue shutters and modern fixtures, and a decorative little nursery. Yet, it would be home—a place where her husband could come, not merely for a night or a weekend, but instead, for every day, and every week, on down through the years. I can see them in their little dream house—sitting in a cozy little love seat before their fireplace, chatting about the day's activities. There, there would be no need to worry about the lack of cadet time.

When her animated, amusing, small talk ceased, I could sense a certain tension in her eyes, and in the firm set of her delicate jaw; and then she said, "We have so little time,—so little time" I knew that she was thinking that soon there would be that inevitable, "So long for awhile," when her Eddie must go off to some foreign land to fight for their dreams—perhaps to die for them.

But now these dreams are intangible hopes of tomorrow—for today there is only a tiny room instead of a cozy little cottage, worry instead of complacency, fond desires instead of reality. Day in and day out she must work to add to their measly income—and then she must come home to her lone existence.

As I sat there, a deep wave of pity came over me and I wanted to ask her, "Is it worth it, are you sorry you didn't wait—wait for a quiet America? My contemplation of this disturbing question was interrupted by the sudden ringing of the telephone, and a voice saying, "Hey, it's Eddie." As she jumped gleefully up, and passed by, with her face glowing and a certain light in her blue eyes, I knew! I knew, too, that the courage that was inbred in the American pioneer woman is not dead, and that no war-time way of life can dull the sharp clean blade of hope that lies never dormant in the breasts of Americans all.

Three Small Girls

By Ruth Lavely

I saw three small girls this morning,
Picking dandelions.
Such pretty, happy children with their
Big yellow bouquets—
So far from hate and greed and war.

Just being with them a moment was
cleansing,
Like walking along in the rain
Or a late-at-night chat
With Mother.

I wondered a moment why they must
lose
That sureness of the beauty of life
With their 'baby-roundness'—
Yet most do.

A grave voice broke in on my thoughts,
"May we pick as many as we like?"
And their happy laughter followed
Me as I answered
And turned on my way home—
Wondering.

Going, Going, Gone

(Continued from page two)

house could be heard snatches of conversation and laughter.

"Did you hear that Jim is buying the Johnson farm?"

". . . . in church last Sunday."

"Have you tasted Millie's new rhubarb preserves?"

"Jack kinda fancies that sorrel horse of yours; hope it doesn't . . ."

"Hey, Mom, where's Dad?"

"Probably out in the barn, looking at the cattle, Billy."

"O. K. I'm going out there, too."

"Be careful, then."

Men were wandering around the horse stalls, inspecting the build of the six horses standing there. One man was going over the various points of a big dapple-gray Percheron, from his head to under his cup-shaped hooves, and the condition of his mouth and teeth. Evidently the examination proved favorable, for he gave the flanks and went on to the cattle, horse an affectionate slap on the which were contentedly standing with heads buried in fragrant hay, whisking their tails from side to side.

The drone of the auctioneer was still going on outside. Soon the livestock would be led out, inspected, and sold. Before the sun had sunk beind the big grove of cottonwood trees, all the numerous and sundry articles listed on the auction poster would have exchanged owners, and most of them would have been moved to new farms. As the last truck filled with squealing hogs and bawling cattle moved out of the yard, you felt a strange emptiness about the farm. Except for a hay rake, the yard was deserted. The new owner would come for that tomorrow.

Tomorrow will also bring the new occupant of the farm and all of his equipment. By the time he is settled, the tenor of the farm will go on as if nothing had interrupted its peaceful life.

Although the tenants of the farm are different, and other animals are in the stables, the fertility of the acres is the same and the life and labor of the farmers will go on as usual year after year.

The farm auction is but one of the average occurrences in the regular living of a typical midwestern rural community. People move out and, inevitably, new families move in. Life's cycle moves forever forward.